

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 7 and 28 have been amended to recite controlling the changeover means to changeover the connection state to a series connection mode “whenever” it is determined or instructed that the current gear shift position is at the reverse position. Basis for this can be found at page 12, lines 10-11; page 32, lines 5-6; and steps S104 and S116 in Figure 6.

As mentioned above, all of the claims now recite controlling the changeover means to change over the connection state to the series connection mode *whenever* it is determined that the current gear shift position is at the reverse position or when this is instructed. The claims had previously instead recited controlling the changeover means to change over the connection state to the series connection mode *when* it is determined that the current gear shift position is at the reverse position or when this is instructed. Applicants had argued in the prior response that Kubo teaches that for reverse operation the output power should be the same as for a conventional ICE vehicle – the power of the engine is directly transmitted to the driveshaft (Kubo '502; col. 13, lines 4-15). This corresponds to the acknowledged prior art, and is the opposite of the claimed invention. Moreover, it was argued that while Kubo also describes that the vehicle mode “may be temporarily switched to HSV [series hybrid vehicle] mode so that regeneration is used with priority,” this description does not teach or suggest changing over the connection state to the series connection mode whenever reverse operation is determined or instructed, as this description simply means that the vehicle is to be operated in a conventional ICE mode during reverse operation, but that the conventional ICE mode may be temporarily switched to the HSV mode in order to regenerate the battery during such times which battery

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regeneration is possible (e.g., when deceleration is requested).

In the outstanding Office Action, the Examiner has again rejected Claims 1, 2, 6-8, 12-14, 16-18 and 28 as being anticipated by Kubo. Responding to Applicants' prior arguments, the Examiner has replied that "[t]he rejected claims only require that the switch to SHV and the switch to reverse occur during the same time period, not as a result of one another." The presently amended claims respond to the Examiner's point in this respect. The presently amended claims now recite a control means that controls the changeover means to change over the connection state to the series connection mode *whenever* outputting power in a reverse direction is instructed or *whenever* it is determined that the current gearshift position is at the reverse position. This language recites the required causative correspondence which the Examiner had alleged was missing from the prior claim language. The present claims do not merely "require that the switch to SHV and the switch to reverse occur during the same time period, not as a result of one another," but require that the change over the connection state to the series connection mode occurs *whenever* outputting power in a reverse direction is instructed or *whenever* it is determined that the current gearshift position is at the reverse position. The Examiner's prior rationale for the continued application of Kubo against the claims thus does not apply to the presently amended claims.

Concerning the rejection of Claims 3 and 9 as being obvious over Kubo in view of Varela, or the rejection of Claims 4, 5, 10 and 11 as being obvious over Kubo in view of Yamaguchi, or the rejection of Claim 27 as being obvious over Kubo in view of Moroto et al, it is noted that the secondary references were each cited to teach features of the dependent claims and do not provide teachings for overcoming the shortcomings of Kubo with respect to

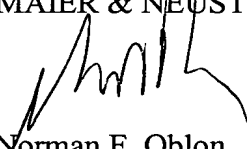
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its failure to teach that the changeover of the connection state to the series connection mode occurs *whenever* outputting power in a reverse direction is instructed or *whenever* it is determined that the current gearshift position is at the reverse position. The amended claims therefore define over any combination of the above references.

Applicants therefore believe that the present application is in a condition for allowance and respectfully solicit an early notice of allowability.

Respectfully submitted,

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